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# WEST GERMAN AIDE IN ESPIONAGE POST IS SAID TO DEFECT

## A BLOW TO SECURITY SEEN

### Leader of Counterintelligence Effort Is Reported to Ask East Berlin for Asylum

By JAMES M. MARKHAM

Special to The New York Times

BONN, Aug. 23 — A top-ranking official in West Germany's counterintelligence agency was reported today to have defected to East Germany.

Officials here agreed that the defection of the official, Hans Joachim Tiedge, had jeopardized Western espionage operations and confronted Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Government with a major scandal.

A hint of the possible repercussions came in an East German report today that suggested that 168 West German agents had been apprehended in the last year and a half.

#### No Official NATO Comment

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization had no official comment, but NATO intelligence experts in Brussels said the defection was a major blow to allied counterintelligence. In Washington, the State Department said the United States would consult with West Germany to determine damage to their mutual security interests.

An Interior Ministry spokesman declined to link Mr. Tiedge's case to the disappearance of two private secretaries and a West German Army employee, all suspected East German spies, in the last three weeks. But other officials said it appeared likely that Mr. Tiedge had warned the others to flee West Germany.

One of the secretaries, Sonja Lüneburg, worked for Martin Bangemann, the West German Economics Minister and chairman of the Free Democratic Party, the junior partner in the coalition government.

A statement released by the East German press agency A.D.N. reported that Mr. Tiedge, a 19-year veteran of the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution, had "crossed to" East Germany and asked for asylum.

Mr. Tiedge, who was reported to have a drinking problem and a disor-

derly private life, was the head of the Cologne-based agency's efforts to ferret out East German spies. He had been missing since Monday.

"This case will have serious results for West Germany's security," Hans Neusel, a state secretary in the Interior Ministry, said at a news conference.

Other West German intelligence authorities said the Tiedge case was the most serious betrayal of Bonn and its allies since Günter Guillaume, a close aide to Chancellor Willy Brandt, was exposed as an East German spy in 1974. Mr. Brandt resigned as Chancellor over the Guillaume affair.

The West German Attorney General, Kurt Rebmann, said today that Mr. Tiedge, 48 years old, had a "complete overview" of West Germany's counterintelligence operations that, if conveyed to East Germany, would amount to "a very severe case of treason in the intelligence realm."

At his news conference, Mr. Neusel said Mr. Tiedge had worked in "sensitive posts" at the agency for almost two decades and knew "a long list of contact persons" working for West German intelligence in East Germany.

"We hope that for those concerned no concrete damages will arise," he said, adding that steps were being taken to limit the damage.

West German officials said they had learned of Mr. Tiedge's defection from A.D.N.'s midday announcement. A.D.N. later issued a separate item saying that Mr. Tiedge's defection showed that East Germany "was constantly in the picture" about the coordination of West German espionage by Chancellor Kohl's office.

#### 'A Little Loss of Trust'

Richard Meier, a former head of the Cologne agency, said the defection would inevitably generate "a little loss of trust" among West Germany's allies. Like others, Mr. Meier expressed astonishment that the counterintelligence official had been kept at his post despite a history of heavy drinking, debts and depression.

"He was overwhelmed by something," Mr. Meier said in an interview. "The main problem is that he knew about all of our methods. He knew about our weaknesses and their weaknesses, ones they didn't even know about."

Mr. Neusel contended that Mr. Tiedge's personal problems had not interfered with his work. "If he were fired you can't imprison or isolate him," he added, "and you put him in a psychological situation where he becomes a security risk. It's better to watch over a man like that than put him on the street."

The Interior Ministry official said it was uncertain whether Mr. Tiedge had long been a "mole" for East German intelligence or had yielded recently under accumulated pressures. "The indications are currently that this was an emotional panic reaction," he said.

Although Mr. Tiedge had been out of touch with his office since Monday, Mr. Neusel said it was not until Wednesday, when his three teen-age daughters reported him missing to the police, that a search was launched.

Mr. Tiedge was reported to have been depressed since his wife died three years ago. Residents of his middle-class Cologne neighborhood have complained about his drunkenness, and a housekeeper said he had left papers stamped "top secret" strewn about his bungalow-style home.

Born in Berlin, Mr. Tiedge, the son of a bank employee, studied law before joining the counterintelligence agency.

Late Thursday the authorities incorrectly gave Mr. Tiedge's first name as Heinz. Today his correct name was given.

#### U.S. to Consult West Germany

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23 — The State Department said today that the United States would consult with West Germany on the defection of the counterintelligence official to determine what damage had been done to their mutual security interests.

At the same time, a former senior American intelligence officer in Bonn, now in retirement here, called the defection a "devastating blow" to West Germany but "much less than an international catastrophe."

Charles Redman, a State Department spokesman, said "there will be close consultations" with West Germany to "determine what damage might ultimately have been done to our interests." He declined further comment, citing an "unfolding situation."

In a telephone interview, the former American intelligence officer, who asked not to be identified by name, said that although Mr. Tiedge had been in a position to betray West German operations, allied countries would not ordinarily have shared information with the defector's office.

Accordingly, the retired official said, Mr. Tiedge probably could not seriously compromise the agents or secret operations of West Germany's allies.

"This man was clearly in one of the key positions in West German-East German intelligence because his main job was countering East German-run operations," the retired official said. "So it may be a devastating blow in that respect to the West Germans."

But while there are "certain international liaisons" involving counterintelligence information, he said, "I think you have to say this does not look like an international catastrophe."